

Message Text

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ACTION EA-09

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 OMB-01

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----- 046203

P R 300805Z NOV 76

FM AMCONSUL NAHA

TO AMEMBASSY TOKYO

INFO SECSTATE WASH DC 2269

CG USAGO MACHINATO

CG 313 AD/18TFW KADENA AFB

COMFLEACTS OKINAWA

CG MARCORB, CAMP BUTLER

OAC, CAMP BUTLER

FBIS OKINAWA

COMUSJAPAN YOKOTA AFB

CG 5TH AF, YOKOTA JAPAN

CG USARJ CAMP ZAMA JAPAN

COMNAVFORJAPAN, YOKOSUKA, JAPAN

CINCPAC CAMP SMITH, HAWAII

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CINCPAC ALSO FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: N/A

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TAGS: PINT, MILI, JA

SUBJECT: APATHY IN OKINAWA TOWARD GENERAL ELECTIONS

REF: NAHA 533 (DTG 090830Z NOV 76)

1. SUMMARY. THIS GENERAL ELECTION CAMPAIGN IS TURNING OUT
TO BE QUIETEST ON RECORD. SAME CANDIDATES ARE RUNNING THIS
TIME AS IN LAST ELECTION IN 1972, AND ELECTION OUTCOME SEEMS
FAIRLY PREDICTABLE. THUS FAR, THERE HAS BEEN NO EXCITING
NEW ISSUE. LOCKHEED IS REMOTE FROM IMMEDIATE CONCERNS OF VOTERS
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HERE AND IS BEING GIVEN ACADEMIC TREATMENT BY ALL CANDIDATES.

CURRENT ECONOMIC RECESSION IN OKINAWA IS MAIN FOCUS OF CAMPAIGN ORATORY, BUT IS BEING ARGUED ALONG PREDICTABLE LINES. PRESENCE OF US MILITARY BASES IS BEING TREATED DISPASSIONATELY IN COMPARISON WITH PREVIOUS ELECTIONS. IN SUM, ELECTION IS NOT CENTERING ON ISSUES AND OUTCOME WILL BE PREDOMINATELY DETERMINED BY PERSONAL LOYALTIES AND OTHER LOCAL FACTORS.

2. BY ALL ACCOUNTS, THIS IS TURNING OUT TO BE DULLEST DIET ELECTION CAMPAIGN SINCE OKINAWA ACHIEVED DIET REPRESENTATION IN 1970. TURNOUT AT RALLIES AND JOINT DEBATE SESSIONS OF CANDIDATES HAS BEEN POOR. ONE REASON FOR PUBLIC APATHY IS THAT THIS IS A REPEAT OF 1972 GENERAL ELECTION WITH SAME

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SEVEN CANDIDATES RUNNING FOR FIVE SEATS. ONLY 1-2 SEATS ARE IN QUESTION WITH AT LEAST THREE INCUMBENTS EXPECTED TO WIN REELECTION: NISHIME AND KOKUBA OF LDP AND UEHARA OF JSP.

3. ANOTHER REASON FOR PUBLIC APATHY IS LACK OF ANY EXCITING CAMPAIGN ISSUES. LOCKHEED IS ISSUE, BUT IT HAS BEEN ARGUED FOR MONTHS IN NATIONAL ARENA, AND IS REMOTE FROM IMMEDIATE CONCERNS OF VOTERS ON OKINAWA. TO BE SURE, REFORMIST CANDIDATES POINT TO LOCKHEED AS AMPLT REASON FOR THROWING LDP OUT OF OFFICE. LDP CANDIDATES HERE ACKNOWLEDGE LOCKHEED AS PROBLEM BUT IN NEXT BREATH STATE THAT THEY SHOULD BE REELECTED TO HELP REFORM THE PARTY AND PREVENT CORRUPTION AFFECTING OTHER PARTIES AS WELL. ASATO (DSP) HAS REPEATEDLY SAID THAT OPPOSITION PARTIES HAVE NOTHING TO GLOAT ABOUT, SINCE LOCKHEED WAS FIRST EXPOSED NOT BY THEM BUT BY A FOREIGN PARLIAMENT.

4. ALL CANDIDATES ARE FOCUSING ON MAIN CONCERNS OF OKINAWAN VOTER--ECONOMIC RECESSION HERE AS SEEN IN HIGH UNEMPLOYMENT RATE (THREE TIMES NATIONAL AVERAGE), LARGE NUMBERS OF BANKRUPTCIES, AND INFLATION. REFORMISTS FAULT CONSERVATIVE-

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LED GOJ FOR CUASING THESE CONDITIONS DUE TO POOR PLANNING LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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AND INSUFFICIENT FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE TO OKINAWA. CONSERVATIVE CANDIDATES, ON OTHER HAND, FAULT REFORMIST-LED PREFECTURAL GOVERNMENT FOR INCOMPETENCE, AND FAULT REFORMISTS ORGANIZATIONS FOR DISCOURAGING INDUSTRIAL INVESTMENT FROM MAINLAND JAPAN BY THEIR OUTCRY OVER POLLUTION.

5. SUGGESTED ECONOMIC REMEDIES, HOWEVER, READ ALMOST THE SAME WHETHER COMING FROM CONSERVATIVES OR REFORMISTS. ALL CANDIDATES DEMAND THAT PREFERENTIAL TREATMENT GIVEN OKINAWA

(E.G. SUBSIDIES, LOWER TARIFFS, AND TAXES) BE EXTENDED BEYOND FIVE-YEAR PERIOD EXPIRING NEXT MAY, THAT GOJ PROVIDE SUBSIDIES AND FACILITIES (E.G. JNR FERRIES) TO BRING DOWN TRANSPORTATION COSTS BETWEEN MAINLAND JAPAN AND OKINAWA, AND THAT GOJ FINANCE LARGE PUBLIC WORKS PROJECTS TO EXPAND JOB OPPORTUNITIES.

6. THUS FAR, US MILITARY BASES HAVE NOT BEEN RAISED BY REFORMISTS BEYOND BOILER-PLATE ARGUMENTS AGAINST PRESENCE OF BASES. ONLY NEW ISSUE HAS BEEN DEBATE OVER OKINAWA LAND BILL WHICH, REFORMISTS CLAIM, IS DISCRIMINATORY AND DESIGNED TO "PERPETUATE" US MILITARY USE OF LAND. EVEN THIS

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ISSUE HAS NOT AROUSED MUCH EMOTION LOCALLY SINCE THE BILL DIED IN LAST DIET SESSION AND IS NOT LIKELY TO COME UP AGAIN UNTIL NEXT SPRING, AND SINCE 98 PERCENT OF MILITARY LANDOWNERS FIND NO FAULT WITH THE BILL. A NUMBER OF POTENTIALLY TROUBLE-SOME BASE ISSUES EXIST--E.G., ARTILLERY FIRING OVER HIGHWAY 104, YOMITAN ANTENNA CONSTRUCTION, IE SHIMA BOMBING RANGE, STEVEDORING AT NAHA MILITARY PORT, AND RIFS OF BASE EMPLOYEES. HOWEVER, THEY HAVE THUS FAR REMAINED DORMANT AND LARGELY UNREPORTED BY LOCAL PRESS DURING THIS CAMPAIGN.

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